

# SONGS OF PEACE

BY  
FRANCIS LEDWIDGE  
WITH AN INTRODUCTION  
BY LORD DUNSANY



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**I**N this selection that Corporal Ledwidge has asked me to make from his poems I have included "A Dream of Artemis," though it was incomplete and has been hurriedly finished. Were it not included on that account many lines of extraordinary beauty would remain unseen. He asked me if I did not think that it ended too abruptly, but so many pleasant things ended abruptly in the summer of 1914, when this poem was being written, that the blame for that may rest on a meaner, though more exalted, head than that of the poet.

In this poem, as in the other one that has a classical theme, "The Departure of Proserpine," those who remember their classics may find faults, but I read the "Dream of Artemis" merely as an expression of things that the poet has seen and dreamed in Meath, including a most beautiful description of a fox-hunt in

the north of the county, in which he has probably taken part on foot ; and in " The Departure of Proserpine," whether conscious or not, a crystallization in verse of an autumnal mood induced by falling leaves and exile and the possible nearness of death.

The second poem in the book was written about a little boy who used to drive cows for some farmer past the poet's door very early every morning, whistling as he went, and who died just before the war. I think that its beautiful and spontaneous simplicity would cost some of our writers gallons of midnight oil.

Of the next, " To a Distant One," who will not hope that when " Fame and other little things are won " its clear and confident prophecy will be happily fulfilled ?

Quite perfect, if my judgment is of any value, is the little poem on page 53, " In the Mediterranean—Going to the War."

Another beautiful thing is " Homecoming " on page 70.

" The sheep are coming home in Greece,  
Hark the bells on every hill,  
Flock by flock and fleece by fleece."

One feels that the Greeks are of some use, after all, to have inspired—with the help of their sheep—so lovely a poem.

“ The Shadow People ” on page 83 seems to me another perfect poem. Written in Serbia and Egypt, it shows the poet still looking steadfastly at those fields, though so far distant then, of which he was surely born to be the singer. And this devotion to the fields of Meath that, in nearly all his songs, from such far places brings his spirit home, like the instinct that has been given to the swallows, seems to be the key-note of the book. For this reason I have named it *Songs of Peace*, in spite of the circumstances under which they were written.

There follow poems at which some may wonder: “ To Thomas McDonagh,” “ The Blackbirds,” “ The Wedding Morning ”; but rather than attribute curious sympathies to this brave young Irish soldier I would ask his readers to consider the irresistible attraction that a lost cause has for almost any Irishman.

Once the swallow instinct appears again—in the poem called “ The Lure ”—and a longing

for the South, and again in the poem called "Song": and then the Irish fields content him again, and we find him on the last page but one in the book making a poem for a little place called Faughan, because he finds that its hills and woods and streams are unsung. Surely for this if there be, as many believed, gods lesser than Those whose business is with destiny, thunder and war, small gods that haunt the groves, seen only at times by few, and then indistinctly at evening, surely from gratitude they will give him peace.

DUNSANY

## CONTENTS

### AT HOME

	PAGE
A DREAM OF ARTEMIS . . . . .	15
A LITTLE BOY IN THE MORNING . . . . .	30

### IN BARRACKS

TO A DISTANT ONE . . . . .	35
THE PLACE . . . . .	37
MAY . . . . .	39
TO EILISH OF THE FAIR HAIR . . . . .	41

### IN CAMP

CREWBAWN . . . . .	45
EVENING IN ENGLAND . . . . .	46

### AT SEA

CROCKNAHARNA . . . . .	51
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN—GOING TO THE WAR	53
THE GARDENER . . . . .	54

## IN SERBIA

	PAGE
AUTUMN EVENING IN SERBIA . . . . .	59
NOCTURNE . . . . .	61
SPRING AND AUTUMN . . . . .	63

## IN GREECE

THE DEPARTURE OF PROSERPINE . . . . .	67
THE HOMECOMING OF THE SHEEP . . . . .	70
WHEN LOVE AND BEAUTY WANDER AWAY . . . . .	72

## IN HOSPITAL IN EGYPT

MY MOTHER . . . . .	77
SONG . . . . .	79
TO ONE DEAD. . . . .	80
THE RESURRECTION . . . . .	82
THE SHADOW PEOPLE . . . . .	83

## IN BARRACKS

AN OLD DESIRE . . . . .	87
THOMAS McDONAGH . . . . .	88
THE WEDDING MORNING . . . . .	89
THE BLACKBIRDS . . . . .	91
THE LURE . . . . .	93
THRO' BOGAC BAN . . . . .	95

# CONTENTS

II

	PAGE
FATE . . . . .	9
EVENING CLOUDS . . . . .	98
SONG . . . . .	100
THE HERONS . . . . .	101
IN THE SHADOWS . . . . .	102
THE SHIPS OF ARCADY . . . . .	103
AFTER . . . . .	105
TO ONE WEEPING . . . . .	106
A DREAM DANCE . . . . .	107
BY FAUGHAN . . . . .	108
IN SEPTEMBER . . . . .	110



AT HOME



## A DREAM OF ARTEMIS

THERE was soft beauty on the linnet's tongue  
To see the rainbow's coloured bands arch wide.  
The thunder darted his red fangs among  
South mountains, but the East was like a  
    bride

Drest for the altar at her mother's door  
Weeping between two loves. The fields were  
    pied

With May's munificence of flowers, that wore  
The fashion of the days when Eve was young,  
God's kirtles, ere the first sweet summer died.  
The blackbird in a thorn of waving white  
Sang bouquets of small tunes that bid me turn  
From twilight wanderings thro' some old  
    delight

I heard in my far memory making mourn.  
Such music fills me with a joy half pain,  
And beats a track across my life I spurn  
In sober moments. Ah, this wandering brain  
Could play its hurdy-gurdy all the night  
To vagrant joys of days beyond the bourn.

I heard the river warble sweetly nigh  
To meet the warm salt tide below the weir,  
And saw a coloured line of cows pass by,—  
And then a voice said quickly, “ Iris here ! ”  
“ What message now hath Hera ? ” then I  
    woke,  
An exile in Arcadia, and a spear  
Flashed by me, and ten nymphs fleet-footed  
    broke  
Out of the coppice with a silver cry,  
Into the bow of lights to disappear.

For one blue minute then there was no sound  
Save water-noise, slow round a rushy bend,  
And bird-delight, and ripples on the ground  
Of windy flowers that swelling would ascend  
The coloured hill and break all beautiful  
And, falling backwards, to the woods would  
send

The full tide of their love. What soft moons pull  
Their moving fragrance? did I ask, and found  
Sad Io in far Egypt met a friend.—

It was my body thought so, far away  
In the grey future, not the wild bird tied  
That is the wandering soul. Behind the day  
We may behold thee, soft one, hunted wide  
By the loud gadfly; but the truant soul  
Knows thee before thou lay by night's dark  
side,

Wed to the dimness; long before its dole

Was meted it, to be thus pound in clay  
That daubs its whiteness and offends its pride.

There were loud questions in the rainbow's end,  
And hurried answers, and a sound of spears.  
And through the yellow blaze I saw one bend  
Down on a trembling white knee, and her tears  
Fell down in globes of light, and her small  
mouth

Was filled up with a name unspoken. Years  
Of waiting love, and all their long, long drought  
Of kisses parched her lips, and did she spend  
Her eyes blue candles searching thro' her  
fears.

"She hath loved Ganymede, the stolen boy."  
Said one, and then another, "Let us sing  
To Zeus that he may give her living joy  
Above Olympus, where the cool hill-spring

Of Lethe bubbles up to bathe the heart  
Sorrow's lean fingers bruised. There eagles  
wing  
To eyries in the stars, and when they part  
Their broad dark wings a wind is born to  
buoy  
The bee home heavy in the far evening."

## HYMN TO ZEUS

" GOD, whose kindly hand doth sow  
The rainbow showers on hill and lawn,  
To make the young sweet grasses grow  
And fill the udder of the fawn.  
Whose light is life of leaf and flower,  
And all the colours of the birds.  
Whose song goes on from hour to hour  
Upon the river's liquid words.

Reach out a golden beam of thine  
And touch her pain. Your finger-tips  
Do make the violets' blue eclipse  
Like milk upon a daisy shine.

God, who lights the little stars,  
And over night the white dew spills.  
Whose hand doth move the season's cars  
And clouds that mock our pointed hills.  
Whose bounty fills the cow-trod wold,  
And fills with bread the warm brown sod.  
Who brings us sleep, where we grow old  
'Til sleep and age together nod.

Reach out a beam and touch the pain  
A heart has oozed thro' all the years.  
Your pity dries the morning's tears  
And fills the world with joy again ! ”

The rainbow's lights were shut, and all the  
maids

Stood round the sad nymph in a snow-white  
ring,

She rising spoke, "A blue and soft light  
bathes

Me to the fingers. Lo, I upward swing ! "

And round her fell a mantle of blue light.

" Watch for me on the forehead of evening."

And lifting beautiful went out of sight.

And all the flowers flowed backward from the  
glades,

An ebb of colours redolent of Spring.

Beauty and Love are sisters of the heart,

Love has no voice, and Beauty whispered song.

Now in my own, drawn silently apart

Love looked, and Beauty sang. I felt a strong

Pulse on my wrist, a feeling like a pain  
In my quick heart, for Love with gazes long  
Was worshipping at Artemis, now lain  
Among the heaving flowers . . . I longed to  
    dart

And fold her to my breast, nor saw the wrong.  
She lay there, a tall beauty by her spear,  
Her kirtle falling to her soft round knee.  
Her hair was like the day when evening's near,  
And her moist mouth might tempt the golden  
    bee.

Smile's creases ran from dimples pink and  
    deep,

And when she raised her arms I loved to see  
The white mounds of her muscles. Gentle  
    sleep

Threatened her far blue looks. The noisy weir  
Fell into a low murmuring lullaby.

And then the flowers came back behind the  
heel

Of hunted Io: she, poor maid, had fear  
Wide in her eyes looking half back to steal  
A glimpse of the loud gadfly fiercely near.  
In her right hand she held a slanting light,  
And in her left her train. Artemis here  
Raised herself on her palms, and took a white  
Horn from her side and blew a silver peal  
'Til three hounds from the coppice did appear.

The white nine left the spaces of flowers, and  
now

Went calling thro' the wood the hunter's call.  
Young echoes sleeping in the hollow bough  
Took up the shouts and handed them to all  
Their sisters of the crags, 'til all the day  
Was filled with voices loud and musical.

I followed them across a tangled way  
'Til the red deer broke out and took the brow  
Of a wide hill in bounces like a ball.  
Beside swift Artemis I joined the chase ;  
We roused up kine and scattered fleecy flocks ;  
Crossed at a mill a swift and bubbly race ;  
Scaled in a wood of pine the knotty rocks ;  
Past a grey vision of a valley town ;  
Past swains at labour in their coloured frocks ;  
Once saw a boar upon a windy down ;  
Once heard a cradle in a lonely place,  
And saw the red flash of a frightened fox.

We passed a garden where three maids in blue  
Were talking of a queen a long time dead.  
We caught a green glimpse of the sea : then  
thro'

A town all hills ; now round a wood we sped

And killed our quarry in his native lair.

Then Artemis spun round to me and said,

“ Whence come you ? ” and I took her long  
damp hair

And made a ball of it, and said, “ Where you  
Are midnight’s dreams of love.” She dropped  
her head,

No word she spoke, but, panting in her side,  
I heard her heart. The trees were all at peace,  
And lifting slowly on the grey eve-tide  
A large and lovely star. Then to release  
Her hair, my hand dropped to her girded  
waist

And lay there shyly. “ O my love, the lease  
Of your existence is for ever : taste

No less with me the love of earth,” I cried.

“ Though for so short a while on lands and  
seas

Our mortal hearts know beauty, and overblow,  
And we are dust upon some passing wind,  
Dust and a memory. But for you the snow  
That so long cloaks the mountains to the  
knees

Is no more than a morning. It doth go  
And summer comes, and leaf upon the trees :  
Still you are fair and young, and nothing  
find

In all man's story that seems long ago.  
I have not loved on Earth the strife for gold,  
Nor the great name that makes immortal  
man,

But all that struggle upward to behold  
What still is left of Beauty undisgraced,  
The snowdrop at the heel of winter cold  
And shivering, and the wayward cuckoo  
chased

By lingering March, and, in the thunder's van  
The poor lambs merry on the meagre wold,  
By-ways and cast-off things that lie therein,  
Old boots that trod the highways of the  
world,

The schoolboy's broken hoop, the battered  
bin

That heard the ragman's story, blackened  
places

Where gipsies camped and circuses made  
din,

Fast water and the melancholy traces

Of sea tides, and poor people madly whirled

Up, down, and through the black retreats of  
sin.

These things a god might love, and stooping  
bless

With benedictions of eternal song.—

But I have not loved Artemis the less  
For loving these, but deem it noble love  
To sing of live or dead things in distress  
And wake memorial memories above.

Such is the soul that comes to plead with you  
Oh, Artemis, to tend you in your needs.  
At mornings I will bring you bells of dew  
From honey places, and wild fish from streams  
Flowing in secret places. I will brew  
Sweet wine of alder for your evening dreams,  
And pipe you music in the dusky reeds  
When the four distances give up their blue.

And when the white procession of the stars  
Crosses the night, and on their tattered wings,  
Above the forest, cry the loud night-jars,  
We'll hunt the stag upon the mountain-side,

Slipping like light between the shadow bars  
'Til burst of dawn makes every distance wide.  
Oh, Artemis—what grief the silence brings!  
I hear the rolling chariot of Mars ! ”

## A LITTLE BOY IN THE MORNING

HE will not come, and still I wait.

He whistles at another gate

Where angels listen. Ah, I know

He will not come, yet if I go

How shall I know he did not pass

Barefooted in the flowery grass ?

The moon leans on one silver horn

Above the silhouettes of morn,

And from their nest sills finches whistle

Or stooping pluck the downy thistle.

How is the morn so gay and fair

Without his whistling in its air ?

The world is calling, I must go.

How shall I know he did not pass

Barefooted in the shining grass ?



## IN BARRACKS



## TO A DISTANT ONE

THROUGH wild by-ways I come to you, my love,  
Nor ask of those I meet the surest way,  
What way I turn I cannot go astray  
And miss you in my life. Though Fate may  
    prove

A tardy guide she will not make delay  
Leading me through strange seas and distant  
    lands,  
I'm coming still, though slowly, to your hands.

    We'll meet one day.

There is so much to do, so little done,  
In my life's space that I perforce did leave  
Love at the moonlit trysting-place to grieve  
Till fame and other little things were won.

I have missed much that I shall not retrieve,  
Far will I wander yet with much to do.  
Much will I spurn before I yet meet you,  
So fair I can't deceive.

Your name is in the whisper of the woods  
Like Beauty calling for a poet's song  
To one whose harp had suffered many a wrong  
In the lean hands of Pain. And when the  
broods  
Of flower eyes waken all the streams along  
In tender whiles, I feel most near to you :—  
Oh, when we meet there shall be sun and blue  
Strong as the spring is strong.

## THE PLACE

BLOSSOMS as old as May I scatter here,  
And a blue wave I lifted from the stream.  
It shall not know when winter days are drear  
Or March is hoarse with blowing. But a-dream  
The laurel boughs shall hold a canopy  
Peacefully over it the winter long,  
Till all the birds are back from oversea,  
And April rainbows win a blackbird's song.

And when the war is over I shall take  
My lute a-down to it and sing again  
Songs of the whispering things amongst the  
brake,  
And those I love shall know them by their  
strain.

Their airs shall be the blackbird's twilight song,  
Their words shall be all flowers with fresh dews  
hoar.—

But it is lonely now in winter long,  
And, God ! to hear the blackbird sing once  
more.

## MAY

SHE leans across an orchard gate somewhere,  
Bending from out the shadows to the light,  
A dappled spray of blossom in her hair  
Studded with dew-drops lovely from the night.  
She smiles to think how many hearts she'll  
smite

With beauty ere her robes fade from the lawn.  
She hears the robin's cymbals with delight,  
The skylark in the rosebush of the dawn.

For her the cowslip rings its yellow bell,  
For her the violets watch with wide blue eyes.  
The wandering cuckoo doth its clear name tell  
Thro' the white mist of blossoms where she lies

Painting a sunset for the western skies.

You'd know her by her smile and by her tear

And by the way the swift and martin flies,

Where she is south of these wild days and  
drear.

## TO EILISH OF THE FAIR HAIR

I'D make my heart a harp to play for you  
Love songs within the evening dim of day,  
Were it not dumb with ache and with mildew  
Of sorrow withered like a flower away.

It hears so many calls from homeland places,  
So many sighs from all it will remember,  
From the pale roads and woodlands where  
your face is

Like laughing sunlight running thro' December.

But this it singeth loud above its pain,  
To bring the greater ache: whate'er befall  
The love that oft-times woke the sweeter strain  
Shall turn to you always. And should you call

To pity it some day in those old places  
Angels will covet the loud joy that fills it.  
But thinking of the by-ways where your face is  
Sunlight on other hearts—Ah ! how it kills it.

IN CAMP



## CREWBAWN

WHITE clouds that change and pass,  
And stars that shine awhile,  
Dew water on the grass,  
A fox upon a stile.

A river broad and deep,  
A slow boat on the waves,  
My sad thoughts on the sleep  
That hollows out the graves.

## EVENING IN ENGLAND

FROM its blue vase the rose of evening drops.  
Upon the streams its petals float away.  
The hills all blue with distance hide their  
tops

In the dim silence falling on the grey.  
A little wind said " Hush ! " and shook a spray  
Heavy with May's white crop of opening  
bloom,  
A silent bat went dipping up the gloom.

Night tells her rosary of stars full soon,  
They drop from out her dark hand to her  
knees.

Upon a silhouette of woods the moon

Leans on one horn as if beseeching ease  
From all her changes which have stirred the  
    seas.

Across the ears of Toil Rest throws her veil,  
I and a marsh bird only make a wail.



AT SEA



## CROCKNAHARNA

ON the heights of Crocknaharna,  
(Oh, the lure of Crocknaharna)  
On a morning fair and early  
Of a dear remembered May,  
There I heard a colleen singing  
In the brown rocks and the grey.  
She, the pearl of Crocknaharna,  
Crocknaharna, Crocknaharna,  
Wild with girls is Crocknaharna  
Twenty hundred miles away.

On the heights of Crocknaharna,  
(Oh, thy sorrow Crocknaharna)  
On an evening dim and misty  
Of a cold November day,

There I heard a woman weeping  
In the brown rocks and the grey.  
Oh, the pearl of Crocknaharna  
(Crocknaharna, Crocknaharna),  
Black with grief is Crocknaharna  
Twenty hundred miles away.

IN THE MEDITERRANEAN—GOING  
TO THE WAR

LOVELY wings of gold and green  
Flit about the sounds I hear,  
On my window when I lean  
To the shadows cool and clear.

. . . . .

Roaming, I am listening still,  
Bending, listening overlong,  
In my soul a steadier will,  
In my heart a newer song.

## THE GARDENER

AMONG the flowers, like flowers, her slow  
hands move

Easing a muffled bell or stooping low  
To help sweet roses climb the stakes above,  
Where pansies stare and seem to whisper  
“ Lo ! ”

Like gaudy butterflies her sweet peas blow  
Filling the garden with dim rustlings. Clear  
On the sweet Book she reads how long ago  
There was a garden to a woman dear.

She makes her life one grand beatitude  
Of Love and Peace, and with contented eyes  
She sees not in the whole world mean or rude,  
And her small lot she trebly multiplies.

And when the darkness muffles up the skies  
Still to be happy is her sole desire,  
She sings sweet songs about a great emprise,  
And sees a garden blowing in the fire.



IN SERBIA



## AUTUMN EVENING IN SERBIA

ALL the thin shadows  
Have closed on the grass,  
With the drone on their dark wings  
The night beetles pass.  
Folded her eyelids,  
A maiden asleep,  
Day sees in her chamber  
The pallid moon peep.

From the bend of the briar  
The roses are torn,  
And the folds of the wood tops  
Are faded and worn.

A strange bird is singing  
Sweet notes of the sun,  
Tho' song time is over  
And Autumn begun.

## NOCTURNE

THE rim of the moon  
Is over the corn.  
The beetle's drone  
Is above the thorn.  
Grey days come soon  
And I am alone ;  
Can you hear my moan  
Where you rest, Aroon ?

When the wild tree bore  
The deep blue cherry,  
In night's deep hall  
Our love kissed merry.

But you come no more  
Where its woodlands call,  
And the grey days fall  
On my grief, Astore !

## SPRING AND AUTUMN

GREEN ripples singing down the corn,  
With blossoms dumb the path I tread,  
And in the music of the morn  
One with wild roses on her head.

Now the green ripples turn to gold  
And all the paths are loud with rain,  
I with desire am growing old  
And full of winter pain.



IN GREECE



## THE DEPARTURE OF PROSERPINE

OLD mother Earth for me already grieves,  
Her morns wake weeping and her noons are  
dim,

Silence has left her woods, and all the leaves  
Dance in the windy shadows on the rim  
Of the dull lake thro' which I soon shall pass

To my dark bridal bed

Down in the hollow chambers of the dead.  
Will not the thunder hide me if I call,  
Wrapt in the corner of some distant star  
The gods have never known ?

Alas ! alas !

My voice has left with the last wing, my fall  
Shall crush the flowery fields with gloom, as  
far

As swallows fly.

Would I might die

And in a solitude of roses lie

As the last bud's outblown.

Then nevermore Demeter would be heard

Wail in the blowing rain, but every shower

Would come bound up with rainbows to the  
birds

Wrapt in a dusty wing, and the dry flower

Hanging a shrivelled lip.

This weary change from light to darkness fills

My heart with twilight, and my brightest day

Dawns over thunder and in thunder spills

Its urn of gladness

With a sadness

Through which the slow dew drops drip

And the bat goes over on a thorny wing.

Is it a dream that once I used to sing

From Ægean shores across her rocky isles,  
Making the bells of Babylon to ring

Over the wiles

That lifted me from darkness to the Spring?

And the King

Seeing his wine in blossom on the tree

Danced with the queen a merry roundelay,

And all the blue circumference of the day

Was loud with flying song.—

—But let me pass along:

What brooks it the unfree to thus delay?

No secret turning leads from the gods' way.

## THE HOMECOMING OF THE SHEEP

THE sheep are coming home in Greece,  
Hark the bells on every hill !  
Flock by flock, and fleece by fleece,  
Wandering wide a little piece  
Thro' the evening red and still,  
Stopping where the pathways cease,  
Cropping with a hurried will.

Thro' the cotton-bushes low  
Merry boys with shouldered crooks  
Close them in a single row,  
Shout among them as they go  
With one bell-ring o'er the brooks.  
Such delight you never know  
Reading it from gilded books.

Before the early stars are bright  
Cormorants and sea-gulls call,  
And the moon comes large and white  
Filling with a lovely light  
The ferny curtained waterfall.  
Then sleep wraps every bell up tight  
And the climbing moon grows small.

## WHEN LOVE AND BEAUTY WANDER AWAY

WHEN Love and Beauty wander away,  
And there's no more hearts to be sought and  
won,

When the old earth limps thro' the dreary day,  
And the work of the Seasons cry undone :  
Ah ! what shall we do for a song to sing,  
Who have known Beauty, and Love, and  
Spring?

When Love and Beauty wander away,  
And a pale fear lies on the cheeks of youth,  
When there's no more goal to strive for and  
pray,

And we live at the end of the world's untruth :

Ah ! what shall we do for a heart to prove,


Who have known Beauty, and Spring, and

Love ?



IN HOSPITAL IN EGYPT





## MY MOTHER

God made my mother on an April day,  
From sorrow and the mist along the sea,  
Lost birds' and wanderers' songs and ocean  
spray,  
And the moon loved her wandering jealously.

Beside the ocean's din she combed her hair,  
Singing the nocturne of the passing ships,  
Before her earthly lover found her there  
And kissed away the music from her lips.

She came unto the hills and saw the change  
That brings the swallow and the geese in turns.  
But there was not a grief she deeméd strange,  
For there is that in her which always mourns.

Kind heart she has for all on hill or wave  
Whose hopes grew wings like ants to fly away.  
I bless the God Who such a mother gave  
This poor bird-hearted singer of a day.

## SONG

NOTHING but sweet music wakes

My Beloved, my Beloved.

Sleeping by the blue lakes,

My own Beloved !

Song of lark and song of thrush,

My Beloved ! my Beloved !

Sing in morning's rosy bush,

My own Beloved !

When your eyes dawn blue and clear,

My Beloved ! my Beloved !

You will find me waiting here,

My own Beloved !

## TO ONE DEAD

A BLACKBIRD singing  
On a moss upholstered stone,  
Bluebells swinging,  
Shadows wildly blown,  
A song in the wood,  
A ship on the sea.  
The song was for you  
And the ship was for me.

A blackbird singing  
I hear in my troubled mind,  
Bluebells swinging  
I see in a distant wind.

But sorrow and silence  
Are the wood's threnody,  
The silence for you  
And the sorrow for me.

## THE RESURRECTION

MY true love still is all that's fair,  
She is flower and blossom blowing free,  
For all her silence lying there  
She sings a spirit song to me.

New lovers seek her in her bower,  
The rain, the dew, the flying wind,  
And tempt her out to be a flower,  
Which throws a shadow on my mind.



## THE SHADOW PEOPLE

OLD lame Bridget doesn't hear  
Fairy music in the grass  
When the gloaming's on the mere  
And the shadow people pass :  
Never hears their slow grey feet  
Coming from the village street  
Just beyond the parson's wall,  
Where the clover globes are sweet  
And the mushroom's parasol  
Opens in the moonlit rain.  
Every night I hear them call  
From their long and merry train.  
Old lame Bridget says to me,  
" It is just your fancy, child."

She cannot believe I see  
Laughing faces in the wild,  
Hands that twinkle in the sedge  
Bowing at the water's edge  
Where the finny minnows quiver,  
Shaping on a blue wave's ledge  
Bubble foam to sail the river.  
And the sunny hands to me  
Beckon ever, beckon ever.  
Oh ! I would be wild and free  
And with the shadow people be.

IN BARRACKS



## AN OLD DESIRE

I SEARCHED thro' memory's lumber-room  
And there I found an old desire,  
I took it gently from the gloom  
To cherish by my scanty fire.

And all the night a sweet-voiced one,  
Sang of the place my loves abide,  
'Til Earth leaned over from the dawn  
And hid the last star in her side.

And often since, when most alone,  
I ponder on my old desire,  
But never hear the sweet-voiced one,  
And there are ruins in my fire.

THOMAS McDONAGH

HE shall not hear the bittern cry  
In the wild sky, where he is lain,  
Nor voices of the sweeter birds  
Above the wailing of the rain.

Nor shall he know when loud March blows  
Thro' slanting snows her fanfare shrill,  
Blowing to flame the golden cup  
Of many an upset daffodil.

But when the Dark Cow leaves the moor,  
And pastures poor with greedy weeds,  
Perhaps he'll hear her low at morn  
Lifting her horn in pleasant meads.

## THE WEDDING MORNING

SPREAD the feast, and let there be  
Such music heard as best beseems  
A king's son coming from the sea  
To wed a maiden of the streams.

Poets, pale for long ago,  
Bring sweet sounds from rock and flood,  
You by echo's accent know  
Where the water is and wood.

Harpers whom the moths of Time  
Bent and wrinkled dusty brown,  
Her chains are falling with a chime,  
Sweet as bells in Heaven town.

But, harpers, leave your harps aside,  
And, poets, leave awhile your dreams.  
The storm has come upon the tide  
And Cathleen weeps among her streams.

## THE BLACKBIRDS

I HEARD the Poor Old Woman say :

“ At break of day the fowler came,  
And took my blackbirds from their songs  
Who loved me well thro’ shame and blame.

No more from lovely distances  
Their songs shall bless me mile by mile,  
Nor to white Ashbourne call me down  
To wear my crown another while.

With bended flowers the angels mark  
For the skylark the place they lie,  
From there its little family  
Shall dip their wings first in the sky.

And when the first surprise of flight  
Sweet songs excite, from the far dawn  
Shall there come blackbirds loud with love,  
Sweet echoes of the singers gone.

But in the lonely hush of eve  
Weeping I grieve the silent bills.”  
I heard the Poor Old Woman say  
In Derry of the little hills.

## THE LURE

I SAW night leave her halos down  
On Mitylene's dark mountain isle,  
The silhouette of one fair town  
Like broken shadows in a pile.  
And in the farther dawn I heard  
The music of a foreign bird.

In fields of shady angles now  
I stand and dream in the half dark :  
The thrush is on the blossomed bough,  
Above the echoes sings the lark,  
And little rivers drop between  
Hills fairer than dark Mitylene.

Yet something calls me with no voice  
And wakes sweet echoes in my mind ;  
In the fair country of my choice  
Nor Peace nor Love again I find,  
Nor anything of rest I know  
When south-east winds are blowing low.

## THRO' BOGAC BAN

I MET the Silent Wandering Man,  
Thro' Bogac Ban he made his way,  
Humming a slow old Irish tune,  
On Joseph Plunkett's wedding day.

And all the little whispering things  
That love the springs of Bogac Ban,  
Spread some new rumour round the dark  
And turned their faces from the dawn.

. . . . .

My hand upon my harp I lay,  
I cannot say what things I know;  
To meet the Silent Wandering Man  
Of Bogac Ban once more I go.

## FATE

LUGH made a stir in the air  
With his sword of cries,  
And fairies thro' hidden ways  
Came from the skies,  
And their spells withered up the fair  
And vanquished the wise.

And old lame Balor came down  
With his gorgon eye  
Hidden behind its lid,  
Old, withered and dry.  
He looked on the wattle town,  
And the town passed by.

These things I know in my dreams,  
The crying sword of Lugh,  
And Balor's ancient eye  
Searching me through,  
Withering up my songs  
And my pipe yet new.

## EVENING CLOUDS

A LITTLE flock of clouds go down to rest  
In some blue corner off the moon's highway,  
With shepherd winds that shook them in the  
West

To borrowed shapes of earth, in bright array,  
Perhaps to weave a rainbow's gay festoons  
Around the lonesome isle which Brooke has  
made

A little England full of lovely noons,  
Or dot it with his country's mountain shade.

Ah, little wanderers, when you reach that  
isle

Tell him, with dripping dew, they have not  
failed,

What he loved most ; for late I roamed awhile  
Thro' English fields and down her rivers sailed ;  
And they remember him with beauty caught  
From old desires of Oriental Spring  
Heard in his heart with singing overwrought ;  
And still on Purley Common gooseboys sing.

## SONG

THE winds are scented with woods after rain,  
And a raindrop shines in the daisy's eye.  
Shall we follow the swallow again, again,  
Ah ! little yearning thing, you and I ?

You and I to the South again,  
And heart ! Oh, heart, how you shall sigh,  
For the kind soft wind that follows the rain,  
And the raindrop shed from the daisy's eye.

## THE HERONS

As I was climbing Ardan Mor  
From the shore of Sheelan lake,  
I met the herons coming down  
Before the water's wake.

And they were talking in their flight  
Of dreamy ways the herons go  
When all the hills are withered up  
Nor any waters flow.

## IN THE SHADOWS

THE silent music of the flowers

Wind-mingled shall not fail to cheer

The lonely hours

When I no more am here.

Then in some shady willow place

Take up the book my heart has made,

And hide your face

Against my name which was a shade.

## THE SHIPS OF ARCADY.

THRO' the faintest filigree  
Over the dim waters go  
Little ships of Arcady  
When the morning moon is low.

I can hear the sailors' song  
From the blue edge of the sea,  
Passing like the lights along  
Thro' the dusky filigree.

Then where moon and waters meet  
Sail by sail they pass away,  
With little friendly winds replete  
Blowing from the breaking day.

And when the little ships have flown,  
Dreaming still of Arcady  
I look across the waves, alone  
In the misty filigree.

## AFTER

AND in the after silences  
Of flower-lit distances I'll be,  
And who would find me travels far  
In lands unsung of minstrelsy.  
Strong winds shall cross my secret way,  
And planet mountains hide my goal,  
I shall go on from pass to pass,  
By monstrous rocks, a lonely soul.

## TO ONE WEeping

MAIDEN, these are sacred tears,  
Let me not disturb your grief;  
Had I but your bosom's fears  
I should weep, nor seek relief.

My woe is a silent woe  
'Til I give it measured rhyme,  
When the blackbird's flute is low  
In my heart at singing time.

## A DREAM DANCE

MAEVE held a ball on the dún,  
Cuculain and Eimer were there,  
In the light of an old broken moon  
I was dancing with Deirdre the fair

How loud was the laughter of Finn  
As he blundered about thro' a reel,  
Tripping up Caoilte the thin,  
Or jostling the dreamy Aleel.

And when the dance ceased for a song,  
How sweet was the singing of Fand,  
We could hear her far, wandering along,  
My hand in that beautiful hand.

BY FAUGHAN

For hills and woods and streams unsung  
I pipe above a rippled cove.  
And here the weaver autumn hung  
Between the hills a wind she wove  
From sounds the hills remember yet  
Of purple days and violet.

The hills stand up to trip the sky,  
Sea-misted, and along the tops  
Wing after wing goes summer by,  
And many a little roadway stops  
And starts, and struggles to the sea,  
Cutting them up in filigree.

Twixt wind and silence Faughan flows,  
In music broken over rocks,  
Like mingled bells the poet knows  
Ring in the fields of Eastern flocks.  
And here this song for you I find  
Between the silence and the wind.

## IN SEPTEMBER

STILL are the meadowlands, and still  
Ripens the upland corn,  
And over the brown gradual hill  
The moon has dipped a horn.

The voices of the dear unknown  
With silent hearts now call,  
My rose of youth is overblown  
And trembles to the fall.

My song forsakes me like the birds  
That leave the rain and grey,  
I hear the music of the words  
My lute can never say.

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